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Food for the Growing Years

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A radio talk by Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, Bureau of Home Economics, broadcast in the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Program, Thursday, February 16, 1939 by the NBC and 100 associated radio stations.

--ooOoo--

MR. BAKER:

First of all we visit with an old friend -- a name and voice some of you doubtless remember, Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter from the Bureau of Home Economics. Mrs. Carpenter, they tell me that you never get tired of talking about food for children. Is that right?

MRS. CARPENTER:

Yes -- it is. You see, mothers' haven't gotten tired of asking questions about their children's diet. The mail that comes to my desk in the Bureau shows that plenty of mothers still haven't all the answers they want and neither have the fathers.

MR. BAKER:

OH! fathers have questions too! ? !

MRS. CARPENTER:

Yes, often. Just yesterday I heard from a father who wanted to know if his five-year-old child should have cheese -- said he understood it was indigestible, but that his family likes and uses a good deal of cheese, so the little girl wanted her share too.

MR. BAKER:

Can't blame her for that! What did you say?

MRS. CARPENTER:

I said "Yes" she could have cheese, if it took its proper place in her diet. There's certainly no reason why she couldn't have cottage cheese, and the hard kinds, like American cheddar cheese, are all right if a child gets them in a suitable form.

MR. BAKER:

What do you mean by that? FORM? Not in big chunks?

MRS. CARPENTER:

That's the idea. You know children are likely not to chew food very thoroughly. And cheese by itself isn't easy to chew -- it's smooth and slippery. If we swallow lumps of cheese, CHUNKS as you said, it takes them a long time to digest. Cheese needs diluting, dividing up --

MR. BAKER:

I get it. Put a slice between crackers and you'll HAVE to chew to get it swallowed, so the cheese is bound to be finely divided before it leaves the mouth.

(over)

MRS. CARPENTER:

Exactly! Divide the cheese from itself. Cheese in sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, cheese in milk sauce, or in tomato sauce --

MR. BAKER:

Sure, Welsh rabbit. Anything about making that in your bulletin "Food for children"?

MRS. CARPENTER:

No, but plenty about children's diet -- what children need for good nutrition.

MR. BAKER:

I take it, then, that you wrote the father what you've told me and sent him a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1674, "Food for Children" -- as sort of an advance answer to other questions. But hold on. I just happened to think. Here we've been talking along and the word "vitamins" hasn't been mentioned. Anything wrong with the vitamin business these days?

MRS. CARPENTER:

No indeed! The vitamin business is good! You know we're all terribly vitamin conscious --almost too much so.

MR. BAKER:

But you and your friends at the Bureau have helped to make parents vitamin conscious, haven't you?

MRS. CARPENTER:

I guess we have. So has the advertising specialist. And vitamins ARE important, -- for you and me, and especially for the children. But vitamins alone can't complete the picture of good nutrition any more than a few intriguing pieces of a jig saw puzzle can complete that kind of a picture.

MR. BAKER:

I can see that, but what's the answer? What do you say to a mother who wants to know what foods are rich in vitamin C -- ascorbic acid you call it nowadays, don't you?

MRS. CARPENTER:

Yes, either one: vitamin C or ascorbic acid. Well, of course I tell the mother the foods that are rich sources of vitamin C: citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerines), and tomatoes (raw, cooked, or canned tomatoes), and greens (all the leafy green vegetables, cultivated kinds or the wild greens that are edible) and the cabbage family (cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli) and the turnip family .

MR. BAKER:

Hold on -- let's see if I've got them: Rich sources of vitamin C are the citrus fruits, tomatoes, greens (not only spinach and kale and other garden varieties but wild dandelion greens and the like) the cabbage family and the turnip cousins. -- Now WHY are these foods rich in vitamin C so important?

MRS. CARPENTER:

Because children need vitamin C for sound tooth construction. Because everyone needs it for the good nutrition of teeth and gums throughout life. And we all need vitamin C every day because our bodies don't store it up for us. But listen, Mr. Baker, PLEASE! You're getting ME side-tracked from the goal. The GOAL isn't just good teeth and healthy gums -- it isn't just selecting foods rich in one vitamin --

MR. BAKER:

All right, Mrs. Carpenter. I know! You think I've forgotten about the other vitamins.

MRS. CARPENTER:

Not only the other vitamins, but the iron for red blood, the calcium, phosphorus, and the vitamin D that our children need, too, for those good teeth we want them to have, and the protein for firm muscle flesh. Don't you see why we may lose the point if we get so interested in just one vitamin, or even in all the vitamins that play a part in good nutrition?

MR. BAKER:

Yes, I see. But if a mother has to memorize a different list of foods rich in each of five or six vitamins, and a list for calcium, one for phosphorus, one for iron, for protein, she has my sympathy, and so has the grocer when she arrives with her food-value lists to do her marketing!

MRS. CARPENTER:

That's just it. A mother doesn't have to do that to be sure to get foods that are important for her children and herself and her husband. We have done lots of work in the Bureau figuring the minerals and vitamins and other food values in four different diet plans, and we've published these plans in a bulletin ---

MR. BAKER:

With all the calculations.

MRS. CARPENTER:

NO!! WITHOUT the calculations, but with a lot of information about food selection and food values. And with diet plans all set up to show what kinds of foods to buy for a week, for a family of one size or another, for a family with a fat or a lean pocketbook. And there's enough talk about vitamins in that bulletin to satisfy the vitamin-conscious mothers and fathers, we HOPE.

MR. BAKER:

Well if you've accomplished all that inside the pages of the bulletin "Diets to fit the family income" Mrs Carpenter, I don't wonder it's been in demand since the day it came from the press. And, mother's, here's the best news: it's free, so if you don't have your copy of F. B. 1757, Diets to fit the family income, I'm sure you'll want to order one today. Maybe you'd like to get the bulletin "Food for Children" too, F. B. 1674. Just write to Bureau of Home Economics; United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

